

At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in Zoom Virtual Meeting on Friday 15 January 2021 at 1.30 pm

Members

Councillor Michael Heaslip (Chair)
Councillor Tony Annison
Councillor Allan Daniels
Councillor Sally Lansbury

Councillor Iain Greaney (Co-Chair)
Councillor John Crouch
Councillor Daniel Horsley

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Carmel Bell, Councillor Malcolm Grainger, Councillor Alan Hedworth, Councillor Adrian Kirkbride, Councillor Carni McCarron-Holmes and Councillor Paul Scott

Staff Present

A FitzGerald, N Hardy, I Hinde, L Jardine and H Sant

Also Present

M Fitzgerald (Executive Member: Policy, Governance and People Resources)

270. Minutes

Councillor Greaney proposed an amendment to minute 185 (27 November 2020), which was to state that he took over as chair for the 'procurement task and finish group'

This was seconded by Councillor Heaslip and all members were in agreement.

The minutes of the meetings held on 06 November and 27 November 2020 were signed as a correct record.

The Chair raised with the members some matters arising for consideration;

- Local Government Reorganisation and future considerations
- Payments to GLL
- Local Govt reorganisation and the understanding of decision making in the context of policy framework between council and executive.

271. Declaration of Interests

None declared

272. Questions

None received

273. Public Participation

None received

274. Progress report from the Climate Change Group

Councillor Lansbury as Chair of the group presented the report to members and provided an introduction to the climate action plan and strategy which includes several themed areas;

- Council activity (transport to/during work, council buildings, energy, paper)
- Community Energy and Resources
- Private and Public Transport
- Domestic Adaptations
- Planning Policy
- Land Management
- Water Management and Coastal Erosion
- Training and Education
- Waste Reduction and Recycling

The group is also working with and is represented on several stakeholder groups including zero carbon Cumbria, joint public health groups, climate change policy group and local community groups – such as Climate Emergency West Cumbria and Sustainable Keswick. The group hopes to host another working group, recognising that hosting a session using video technology may be difficult.

The next focus of the group will be to get the climate action plan and strategy ready for distribution to each of the stakeholder groups.

The next theme the group will be working on is Land Management and Councillor Lansbury confirmed that they are continuously adding stakeholders to the group, including parish councils.

Councillor Fitzgerald (Executive Member: Policy, Governance and People Resources) as portfolio holder then explained some of the work undertaken so far on the waste reduction and recycling theme, this included the new A-Z of recycling webpage and Christmas recycling guidance, members were then shown a short video which showcased recycling at different stages of the process.

Members then asked questions in relation to waste and recycling and whether climate change will be built into existing policies and structures.

Councillor Fitzgerald confirmed that the work of the climate change group has been incorporated into the new waste and recycling policy and officers confirmed that environmental sustainability and climate change is part of the strategy for all policies going forward.

275. Update and discussion on the draft Resilient Communities Strategy

Councillor Fitzgerald (Executive Member: Policy, Governance and People Resources) introduced the draft Resilient Communities Strategy. The strategy underpins the resilient communities' theme as set out in the 2020-2030 council plan and sets out how the Council can help to make communities more resilient and to improve the understanding of the role the Council can play.

The policy looks improve communication with residents and has a shift in policy to enable stronger community engagement.

Councillor Fitzgerald then confirmed that the strategy differs from the Covid 19 Act 2020 response as the objectives differ, the Covid 19 Act 2020 is for emergency situations whilst the Resilient Communities Strategy aims to build on the positive community work going forward.

The Policy Manager (Corporate, Performance and Information) then provided further detail in relation to the Draft Strategy, explaining that the Committee were presented with an early version in October 2020 and that draft was sent to all members for comment/feedback.

The key themes covered in the strategy were then clarified to members,

- Engaging, involving, collaborating, empowering
- Promoting healthy, active lifestyles
- Addressing community safety issues
- Addressing inequalities and hardship

Members were advised that the overall feedback to the draft strategy has been positive comments were raised in relation to improving the community voice in deprived areas in relation to policy planning as well as service delivery. Further feedback was received around diversity and inclusivity, and in particular around community empowerment – finding out what works for each area/community and recognising that one size may not fit all.

The Chair then summed up the report and advised that it was crucial to involve members when engaging with communities as members can act as link between the authority and the public.

Further suggestions came from Cllr Greaney including that the strategy should include reference to promoting sports facilities especially in deprived areas.

276. Forward Plan

A summary of amendments to the published forward plan were provided,

- Strategic Acquisitions of land and buildings in Workington – moved to January 2021
- Contract for supplier of testing hackney carriage and Private Hire vehicles – removed from forward plan
- Strategic Acquisitions of buildings in Maryport – moved to March 2021 Executive Committee.
- Proposed Review of Licensing Fees and Charges – moved to March 2021 Council Meeting
- The Cumbria Coastal Strategy was added to the forward plan, due to go to Council Meeting, January 2021
- Allerdale Economic Strategy and Workington Investment Plan – moved to April 2021 Executive Committee

- Scrap Metal Dealers Act – moved to February 2021 Executive Committee

Debate ensued in relation to Treasury Management and the Cumbria Coastal Strategy, an update regarding the latter will be provided to members.

Members noted the contents of the forward plan

277. Work Programme 2020/21

The Development of a new Housing Strategy item for February 2021 will be moved onto later in the year. As this item has been removed, members agreed to add the draft Economic Development Strategy to the next agenda. The Chair also requested that in addition, members were provided with a brief on the Councils Project Management Systems.

Debate ensued in relation to housing strategy, particularly in Keswick. The Head of Strategy, Policy and Performance explained that members will be able to attend informal policy groups to contribute however this will not be until the housing needs assessments and stock condition surveys have been undertaken.

The Work Programme for 2021/22 was then discussed, it was agreed that the Housing Strategy would be added to 21/22 as well as the Review of Policies and Strategies and Sports and Leisure Procurement.

For the setting of the Work Programme for 2021/22, consideration was given to holding an informal workshop outside the Committee Meeting to set the programme.

Members noted the contents of the Work Programme for 2020/21.

278. Task and Finish Group Updates

Pandemic Task and Finish Group

Councillor Heaslip as Chair of this group advised that the latest report has been circulated to members, adding that a lot of the content has been included in the Draft Resilient Communities Strategy.

Councillor Daniels asked if any resource is available for children who do not have the digital equipment required for home schooling. The Policy Manager (Health Improvement and Inequalities) advised that the Council are working with Cumbria County Council on digital inclusion and an update will be provided to members of the Pandemic Task and Finish Group.

Poverty was also discussed, particular in Keswick, members were advised of 'Ways to Welfare' which is an Cumbria County Council incentive, and further information will be circulated to members.

For the next meeting of the Pandemic Task and Finish Group, members will look at the impact the pandemic is having on Council staff and operations.

Budget Task and Finish Group

A meeting was held with the Finance Officer to understand how budgets are put together and specifically how the 2021/22 budget is coming together.

The group are interested in shadowing the decision-making process and to check the robustness of the 2021/22 budget and this is ongoing.

Procurement Task and Finish Group

The report of the Procurement Task and Finish Group was on the agenda at the Executive Meeting on 13 January 2021, as Councillor Greaney was unable to attend, he will attend the next informal Executive meeting to present the report and answer any questions. Members agreed that this report should then be formally received at the next Executive Committee meeting.

The meeting closed at 3.15 pm